



“5-W’s” & An “H” for Writing a Position Description

Your goal is to communicate the job by stating **“What,” “Why,” “When,” “Where,” “Who”** and **“How.”** There is no need to state the obvious. For example: “Who”, “Where” and “When” are presumed to be you, at your work site during regular hours.

If any of the “5-W’s” & an “H “ are important in understanding the work, it should be there. One can usually analyze most sentences and find a “what,” “how” and “why” (and more) in each.

Some Examples:

1. Provides stenographic services (**what**) for the director’s office (**for whom**) by taking and transcribing shorthand dictation, typing and maintaining records (**how**) to assist in providing timely and accurate information to the public and to staff (**why**).
2. In the State Maintenance Shop in Tok during the summer season and in the State Maintenance Shop in Anchorage during the winter season (**where**), operates an engine lathe (**what**) by making setups and manipulating controls (**how**) to cut and shape external and internal surfaces of valve castings for the repair of engines on state owned road or snow removal equipment (**why**).
3. Designs database system requirements (**what**) shared by the department, Division of Motor Vehicles, and the municipalities of Anchorage and Fairbanks (**for whom**) in implementing the Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program to control/reduce carbon monoxide (CO) emissions in Alaska (**why**).
 - Determines how to collect and compile emissions data to provide the information necessary to generate compliance reports, track certificates and financial data.(**how**)
 - Conducts user and stakeholder interviews, surveys and examines the current systems documentation. (**how**)
 - Completes the market research and prepares the cost/benefit analysis of system options with recommendations to the Director.(**how**)
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AT THE VERY LEAST, EVERY ESSENTIAL DUTY SHOULD EXPRESS “WHAT YOU DO, HOW YOU DO IT AND WHY YOU DO IT.”